

**Doctoral Thesis for  
PhD in International Studies**

**China's Nationalism and Its Quest for  
Soft Power through Cinema**

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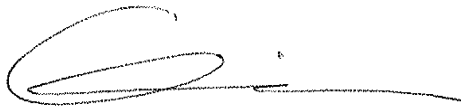
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*CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP*

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

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Date:

6 / 4 / 2014 .

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Almost all the texts from Chinese publications have been translated by myself, and I take responsibility for any error of translation.

## **Abstract**

This study is concerned with the important role that contemporary Chinese cinema has played in fostering nationalism, reconstructing national identities in the PRC, and the fundamental challenges facing China's soft power aspiration and its cinema going-going project. It compares contemporary Chinese films about China's historical clashes with foreign Others with earlier Chinese productions, transnational co-productions, and Hollywood movies of similar themes, focusing on values-orientations and national identity.

The analysis finds that although the Party-state is adamant about China's national unity and sovereignty, it is deliberately more flexible with China's national identity. The differential representations of the Japanese and the Western Others in the post-1989 cinema suggest that China's national identity is an evolving construct tailored to support the CCP's shifting political agenda. The separation of the Japanese and Western Others is designed to simultaneously validate the Party's nationalist ideology and its opening-up policy. Within this context, China's Official Occidentalism is a more fluid and complex concept than Xiaomei Chen has observed in the 1990s. Apart from its domestic concerns, China's official imagination of the West also has an international dimension.

In addition, China's response to Hollywood's representations of *Mulan* is politically defiant and culturally surrendering. This study argues that the CCP's cultural policies of making the past serve the present and making culture serve the state can have serious side effects. Ignoring Joseph Nye's emphasis on the significance of shared values for a nation's soft power, China's soft power-driven cinema going-global project faces the fundamental challenge of lacking moral clarity and the shortage of shared values with the outside world. Nationalism clashes with universal values and China's practice of turning cinema into a nationalistic enterprise and pushing nationalistic films to go global could further undermine, rather than enhance, China's soft power.

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